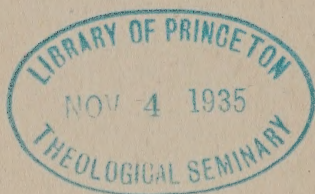


The
GREAT SERMON

JOHN R. BROWNE

BS2418
.4.B88



Division BS2418

Section .4.B88

The
GREAT SERMON

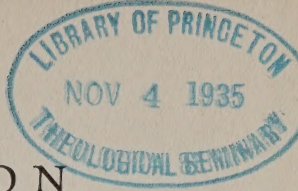
The
G R E A T S E R M O N

by

✓
JOHN R. BROWNE



THE STRATFORD COMPANY
Publishers
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



COPYRIGHTED, 1935

by

JOHN R. BROWNE

Dedicated
TO
MY FAMILY

FOREWORD

MANY people are saying that the Sermon on the Mount is a mere summary of early Christian philosophy and is of little or no present-day value. They treat it as ancient religious lore and manifest but slight concern at the mention of it. The Beatitudes, in particular, are too frequently regarded as impractical idealisms. Indeed, orthodox interpretations seem to be losing their appeal; doctrinal viewpoints appear to be "over our heads"; and men are gradually getting away from beliefs that have no surer basis than blind faith. In these times, when the thought of the masses is disturbed by repercussions following an era of exaggerated material-mindedness, we may well afford to consider anew some fundamental spiritual values.

The author is persuaded that the widespread lack of interest in The Great Sermon is unfortunate,—especially for those who are lacking in such interest. He is convinced that the highest good will come to all of us by observance of its

ethics and by obedience to its precepts. Hence, he has felt the urge to humbly present these pages in a brief, simple, concrete way,—un-colored by the usual doctrinal embellishments, and, thus, to point out,—

(1) That the Beatitudes of The Great Sermon are workable affirmations of Truth which, when rightly interpreted, understood, and applied in the solution of our daily problems, will add much to the store of human happiness and security; and,

(2) That The Great Sermon is yet the most sublime and practical announcement of Christian philosophy ever uttered.

The several Beatitudes are interpreted in the first five chapters of this book. The sixth chapter is an interpretation of the remainder of The Great Sermon.

JOHN R. BROWNE.

Marion, Indiana,
June 3, 1935.

Contents

The First Beatitude	I
The Second Beatitude	II
The Third Beatitude	27
The Fourth Beatitude	41
The Fifth Beatitude	43
The Sixth Beatitude	47
The Seventh Beatitude	49
The Eighth Beatitude	51
The Great Sermon, Continued	61

THE GREAT SERMON

I

“Blessed are the poor in spirit; for
their’s is the kingdom of heaven.”

TO CARELESS thinkers, the First Beatitude is a paradox. They say it puts a premium on being downcast, downtrodden, down-and-out. Not so!

Who are the “poor in spirit”? They are exactly what the term implies,—those who are spiritually poor. Why, then, did the Master utter a blessing for them? Certainly not because of their unworthiness. Rather because, in spite of their spiritual poverty, they yet might change their thinking and avail themselves of the opportunity to possess and enjoy “the kingdom of heaven.” The door of hope was not closed against them. It is alike a consolation and a blessing to know that the fountain of

infinite Good is flowing eternally for all of us. It is forever ours to share,—if we will.

The term,—“poor in spirit,” as used in the Scriptures, has more than one meaning. In Luke’s gospel (6:20-22), we are told that the Master addressed his disciples thus,—“Blessed are ye poor; for your’s is the kingdom of God.” According to that record, he used the term to express the thought of meekness and humbleness of spirit. In Matthew’s gospel (5:3-10), and elsewhere, the term obviously alludes as well to states or conditions of spiritual indigence. In Moffatt’s translation, the Beatitude reads,—“Blessed are those who feel poor in spirit,”—that is, those who, in their own consciousness, realize a state of spiritual poverty or lowliness. And, in the *Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopedia*, it is said that the “poor” are the “humble, afflicted, mean in their own eyes, low in the eyes of God. Not so much a man destitute of the good things of the earth as a man sensible of his spiritual misery and indigence, who applies for the succor of God”; and the term, “poor in spirit,” is there said to denote “those who, possessed of an interest in the new covenant, and all

its fullness, are sensible of their own sinfulness and emptiness and humbly supplicate every gracious supply from our all-liberal Redeemer." The foregoing interpretations may well include those who are so destitute of spiritual grace as to harbor thoughts of hate, envy, remorse, jealousy, hopelessness, self-depreciation. Out of the amplitude of his all-embracing love, the Master uttered a blessing for the "poor in spirit" everywhere to assure them that, as they change their thinking and put on the "mind . . . which was also in Christ Jesus," they may share the opportunity to possess and enjoy "the kingdom of heaven,"—even here and now.

The "poor in spirit," as it were, do not understand and obey the Master's teaching. They are victims of wrong thinking. They seem to be unaware of what is true about God, man, themselves. When the sunlight of Truth shines about them, they too frequently hide behind thought-clouds of their own creation and fail to see its rays because of self-imposed obstructions. Apparently, they have filled their mental boat with a cargo of false beliefs about the truth they should know, and have set out upon

the sea of mortal experience minus a rudder or anchor. Nevertheless, the door of opportunity is always open to them whereby their thinking may be corrected and brought into harmony with the "mind" of the Master. Thus, "their's" may be "the kingdom of heaven."

What, then, is "the kingdom of heaven"? And, where is it? How may we be aware of its presence,—either now or hereafter? The "poor in spirit" do not seem to have found the answers to these questions. Yet, the fault is not entirely their own. The coiners of definitions and the designers of creeds, by sincere efforts to make Truth simple, have done some harm. They have worked overtime at trying to define heaven,—to tell us what and where it is, and how we may attain it. They have located it up in the sky, paved it with golden streets, and provided it with pearly gates through which, after the death experience, a select few may enter and enjoy eternal harmony and happiness. Indeed, such has been the common belief. The "poor in spirit" have been taught to accept that belief without question and it has helped to keep them "poor in spirit." It has been made

hard for them to understand that they may possess and enjoy heaven,—even here and now.

The Pharisees demanded of the Master “when the kingdom of God should come.” He answered them, saying,—“The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or Lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.” His reply to that perplexing inquiry was simple. It was complete. It stands as the most comprehensive statement ever uttered. It tells us exactly when and where the “kingdom of God” may be found.

Think of it! The Master said,—“the kingdom of God is within you.” Hence, it is nearer than the creeds have taught us to believe. This fact should arouse new hope in the consciousness of the “poor in spirit.” It should awaken them from their dark dreams of mental despair, remorse, uncertainty, ingratitude, sinfulness, self-depreciation, and point the way to heaven,—even here and now. Where is it? It is “within you,”—within your own consciousness. You will realize this fact when you exclude from consciousness wrong thinking in its many forms and

reflect in consciousness only such thoughts as are pure, true, kind, and lovely. Then you will understand what the Master meant when he said,—“the kingdom of God is within you.”

Think again! “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.” We cannot see it, nor hear it, nor touch it. The physical senses are of no aid in our quest of it. It is a state of mind,—a state of consciousness, enriched with spiritual ideas. It cometh when, and in the degree, we quit thinking in terms of hate, anger, despair, remorse, jealousy, ingratitude, spiritual poverty, self-depreciation; when, and in the degree, we think in terms of “love, joy, peace, . . . gentleness, goodness, . . . meekness,” gratitude, and the like, “against such,” as Paul said, “there is no law.” It is in this sense that “the kingdom of God is within you.” It cannot be otherwise.

“Nonsense,” some may say. Perhaps others will inquire,—“How may the ‘poor in spirit’ so change their thinking?” The answer is easy. It is demonstrable. One illustration will suffice. For instance, in moments of doubt, despair, remorse, uncertainty, spiritual poverty, or self-depreciation, do you ever stop to count your

blessings? When you feel "poor in spirit," do you ever pause to express gratitude for those things that are already yours to enjoy? You may not have much of this world's goods. Your burdens may be hard to bear. Yet, your lot is no worse than that experienced by others who have not been heard to complain. You have lived in God's sunshine,—amid the beauties of nature and the varied manifestations of life about you. You have enjoyed the associations, the companionships, and the helpful and loving assistance of family, friends, neighbors. Above all, you are a child of Almighty God whose blessings are yours to share eternally,—here, now, forever! Do you ever stop to count your blessings? Do you ever pause to express gratitude for those things that are already yours to enjoy? Try it! Try it once, twice, three times daily, until it becomes a habit! Then you will not find time to feel "poor in spirit." Your gratitude will make you happy over your lot. You will radiate sunshine where there was darkness before. Thereupon, he who employs labor will wish to have you on his payroll. Your fellow men will assume a different attitude

toward you. You will have become a "new man,"—reflecting the very heaven "within you." Then you will know that this simple change in thinking will enlarge your outlook on life. Then you will know to a degree, at least, that heaven is "within you,"—here and now.

In like manner, you may overcome all forms of wrong thinking that have kept you "poor in spirit." It is your immediate privilege and opportunity to bring heaven into your mental experience and to share the peace, comfort, happiness, and contentment that God has so generously provided for all of His children.

The kingdom of heaven will not appear within us by luck or chance. We must desire it! We must deserve it! We must accept it! It is already ours to possess and enjoy. It is a divine state of consciousness which we may reflect in our thinking and demonstrate in our conduct.

The kingdom of heaven, even if possessed, may be lost to us. We must work as valiantly to retain it as we do to attain it. We must guard it constantly as the "pearl of great price." Do not mortals bolt their doors to keep out intruders? For larger reason, we must bolt the doors of

our minds to keep out evil thoughts,—envy, anger, hatred, remorse, despair, jealousy, temptation, ingratitude, self-depreciation. We must strive to exclude them from our mental soil. We must keep our minds filled with thoughts of “love, joy, peace, . . . gentleness, goodness . . . meekness,” and gratitude, so that evil thoughts cannot enter and find lodgment therein. This work requires intelligent effort. It is your watchful task and mine. It is the price that we must pay for heaven,—real happiness.

“The kingdom of God is within you.” It is “within you,” here and now. It is nowhere else. The Master said so.

Heaven is not away up high
Out of the reach of you and me ;
And we need not look sad and sigh
Before its portals we may see.
It has no pearly gates to ope',
No golden streets on which to tread,—
Nor gilded throne outshining hope
That we can't view until we're dead.
Heaven is not a place at all ;
It is not high, and long, and wide,—
Like some folks think,—with great big wall
Behind which saints may rest and hide.

Heaven's a perfect state of Mind—
That you and I may image clear
In thought and deed ; thus, we shall find
The "kingdom of God" will appear
Within us,—even here and now ;
We need not die to win this goal,
But just think Good and keep our vow
To give up sense for might of Soul.

The "poor in spirit" have been believing that heaven is a far-away place or state of existence. They have forgotten the Master's word,—“the kingdom of God is within you.” They must reverse their mental processes and think of God and man in terms of “love, joy, peace, . . . gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,” mercy, humility, compassion, forgiveness, gratitude, and the like,—thereby shutting out of consciousness all manner of wrong thinking. Thus, they may make manifest in their own experiences the “might of Soul,”—the very power of God, infinite Mind. This manifestation will be a foretaste of immortality. It will be heaven realized,—even here and now.

II

“Blessed are they that mourn;
for they shall be comforted.”

AN ALLEGORY

THERE was once an industrious youth who possessed a strong desire to acquire material wealth. He wooed and wed a modest girl whose parents were well-to-do, and went into business with the family purse and influence as his background. It was believed that his part in the match had been prompted by the latter vantage point. After a time, he gained control of a large manufacturing concern. Those who toiled for him received but scant wages. They worked long hours, as did he,—they, for a meagre living; he, to get wealth, power, and influence in the community. As the years passed, he became more greedy, more exacting in his requirements of others; even more arrogant, more dominant. Old friends began to lose re-

spect for him and he was not unaware of what they were thinking.

So, to overcome the odium that was rapidly attaching to his name and fame, he began to widen his activities. He took to art, purchased fine pictures, and frequently exhibited them with much gusto in public places. He knew nothing of the great painters nor of the spiritual forces that had inspired their masterpieces. This man also sought prominence in the civic and social life of the community and busied himself with a pretense of interest in worthy things. He catered for the favor of the news reporters and loved to see his name in the papers. In these ways, he became a sort of showman. Despite his efforts to cover up, doubts as to his sincerity lingered in the thoughts of others. Personal wealth, power, and influence were his cherished gods. His every act and deed were prompted by selfish motives.

Finally, that ambitious man paid the price. The news was out that he had been stricken. The physicians said he would not recover. A vision of invalidism quite overwhelmed him. Occasionally, a former associate would call with

a word of encouragement, but the disinterested crowd passed by. Gradually, during those long days, weeks, and months of monotonous existence, that man's mind became filled with remorse. His great sorrow was that he could no longer pursue his old schemes. He had become one of the "they that mourn."

Mourners are legion. They embrace that vast group who chase the false gods of human selfishness. To mortal belief, it would seem futile to contend that there is no occasion for mourning. Yet, that must be the argument. Mourning is an erroneous state of thinking that may be corrected by an understanding of the truth about God, man, ourselves.

To mourn is to grieve, to lament, because of something that seems to have been lost; to feel disappointed because of acts of omission or commission in human conduct. The Master uttered a separate Beatitude for mourners. He put them in a class apart from the "poor in spirit." He gave them the assurance that "they shall be comforted,"—that is, the door of op-

portunity is open to them whereby they may "be comforted" when they change their thinking.

In truth, we do not mourn because we lose something. Rather, we mourn because of our mistaken appraisals of that which seems to be lost. It may be money, houses, lands. We forget that these are only material things. They are not the real values in life. They are not comparable with the enduring spiritual values which support the home, the church, the nation, or even civilization. Those who have them are not happy merely because of the having. Many of the so-called well-to-do make away with themselves. Many in the midst of poverty lead happy, contented lives. True happiness exists apart from the possession of material things.

When a depression in business overtakes us, some mourn the loss of capital investments; others, the appalling effects of unemployment. It is said that these conditions are brought on by a stock-market crash, by the loss of confidence, by the situation abroad, and the like. In truth, neither of them is produced by the causes assigned. They are the objective manifestations of what men have been thinking. Did it ever

occur to you that back of the phenomena mentioned was erroneous thinking,—perhaps erroneous mass-thinking?

We mourn because of wrong thinking. Suppose we have lost money, houses, lands. What of it? Has the experience been worth the cost? Has it taught us the much-needed lesson? Have we, like burnt children, learned to shun the fire? If not, we may do our old mistakes over again and suffer the same inevitable consequences. If we are wise, we will quit over-appraising material things; we will cease to worship the false gods of human selfishness; we will seek those spiritual values that do not depreciate in hard times; we will find ourselves! To be comforted, we must reverse our mental processes. How may we do this? Again, one illustration will suffice. For instance, instead of thinking of ourselves alone, we must learn to think of others. We must find our comfort in theirs. That comfort will come as a result of the service we render to mankind. Service is not only an ideal. It is the practical way out of difficulties. Mr. Emerson observed that a beaten path leads to the door of the man who can make the best

mouse-traps. But, when mouse-traps become as little used as the horse and buggy in an automobile age, the beaten path will disappear unless the man shall conceive new ways to serve human needs. The discovery and development of ways to serve those needs have been the major factors in the building of our civilization. They have been the very life-blood of progress. The men and women who have labored unselfishly for human betterment merit our lasting gratitude. They have found their real comfort in contributions to fuller and nobler living. The unfoldment of a great truth and the demonstration of its utility in the service of humanity are sublime accomplishments.

Civilization can be sustained only by the patient endeavor to make its ideals practical in human experience. The great leaders of thought have labored that those ideals might be realized and sustained for the good of others. They have been unselfish benefactors of the race. They have been men and women of vision,—living, thinking, and working in advance of their own day to widen the horizon of human thought so that we may comprehend the realities of life;

that we, in our turn, may likewise illumine the paths, lighten the burdens, and enlarge the opportunities of those less happily situated. This is unselfish service! It is constructive service!

Civilization cannot be sustained on greed and selfishness. They produce our mourners. History records instances, whereby, because of them, and the resulting material madness and sensuous living, peoples have lost even their national existence. Selfish men, in positions of power, have proved faithless to trusts and have wrecked the lives and fortunes of others. They have ridden rough-shod over their fellows for personal gain but, in the end, have met the common fate of mourners. There is no comfort for such as these. They must change their thinking. They must turn from evil ways and enlist in the cause of constructive service. In whatever calling they may choose, they must live it for the good of others. If one is a salesman, he must be interested less in his sale than in the good he will accomplish by making it. If what he sells serves a human need, that service will promote other sales and the profits of his calling will be in-

creased in like proportion. Thus, the buyer will be comforted, and the seller will be comforted.

Some may say,—“That sounds well, but it isn’t practical.” Yet, have the old, selfish methods succeeded? Have they ever brought comfort to anyone? No! Would you venture to affirm that the great men and women who have labored for the betterment of mankind were impractical? They may have been rewarded amply in wealth and spiritual comfort for their benefactions. A “labourer is worthy of his hire.” But, of those who have acquired wealth by living unto themselves alone,—those who have not given back to society an equivalent in constructive service, we may truly say:

Ye Master of Wealth! What are thine aims, hopes, purposes, aspirations?

Dost thou covet thine estates,—houses, lands, intangible things—as the consummation of all thou couldst wish?

Then, ’tis of such as ye that the Scriptures say:
“What is man that thou shouldst magnify him?”

Oh, Master of Wealth! From whence cometh thy possessions?

Hath the same been earned by service? Or,

Hast thou taken from thy brother, or those who toil for thee, that for which thou hast not made due return?

If so, with what propriety dost thou cry out against him whose highest treason is to imitate thy greed?

Hast thou not set the pace in the cruel march of human selfishness?

Get right thyself, Ye Master of Wealth!

Let thy fortune, large or small, be apportioned to the measure of thy service to humanity!

If thou hast more, thy brother hath been robbed; if thy brother hath more, thou hast been robbed!

List to the Master's voice: "And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."

Again, it may be urged that the ideal of constructive service is impracticable because we cannot change human nature; that men will continue to be greedy, selfish, dominant; and that the mental mistakes to which allusion has been made will be repeated. Yet, no ideal can be realized by surrendering to that argument. Each of us must know that there is at least one man whose mental mistakes may be corrected; that there is at least one man who can be depended upon to render constructive service to others. You can and should be that man! I can and should be that man! Civilization rests upon

the moral and spiritual development of the individual man. He is the unit of strength. A nation is as great as the combined and coördinated right thinking of the individual men and women who make up its citizenship. Thus, you and I share alike the opportunity to be of constructive service to mankind. As we reflect to others our improved sense of that opportunity, we unfold to them the way out of the wilderness whose mourners are legion.

OPPORTUNITY!

Some poet says it knocks but once,
Then turns away, our path it shunts,—
Without a hope it leaves us bare
Unless we treasure it with care.
But we *deny* that final chance
Which, if neglected, looks askance
And dooms us to a woeful state,—
Shattering one's faith, soon or late;
For 'tis our priv'lege *now* to share
With all mankind, and everywhere,
The might of Good in thoughts so pure
That blighted hopes may anchor sure
And lift their heads to Mind above,—
Finding peace in His wondrous love.

God's work is done,—the Scriptures say;
Our work,—to do the Master's way.
No less of us doth God demand
Than we shall know and understand
That Love and Truth are always near
For you and me to image clear
In thought and deed, in action bold,—
Thereby may we His likeness hold.
Thus now, and here, and everywhere,—
OPPORTUNITY,—we may share.

The Master did not mean that "they that mourn . . . shall be comforted" because they mourn. He meant that "they shall be comforted" when they give up the false gods of material and selfish thinking and embrace the opportunity to render service to others; when they know and serve the true God,—infinite Mind, and become His image and likeness by reflecting His thoughts,—thoughts that are good, true, pure, and unselfish, and demonstrate their utility in constructive service to mankind. Thereby, "they that mourn . . . shall be comforted."

The allegory continues: One day the stricken man was wheeled into his garden by the nurse.

There, he found a happy, contented laborer toiling away for small wage. They met face to face,—one an austere, broken master of wealth; the other radiating the very heaven within him. The workman plucked a rose and placed it in the feeble hand of his employer. The latter accepted it without a note of gratitude. He just grunted his customary plaint. To this, the smiling gardener ventured to say,—“You will be better, Mr. X.” Then they parted and did not meet again for some days.

Mr. X, in the meantime, remembered that the gardener had said,—“You will be better.” That hopeful thought was constantly in his mind. His nurse had heard him quoting the words aloud. He began to wonder what the meek, happy, contented gardener might have meant. “Does he know that I will be better?” queried the stricken man to the nurse. Then he requested her to bring the workman to his chamber.

The gardener came bearing his usual smile. Mr. X addressed him thus:—“I have been thinking of what you said when we last met. You said that I ‘will be better.’ I have hoped that

might be true, but my case appears to be incurable. The physicians have not encouraged me. You have spoken with such confidence that I now seem to know I 'will be better.' Say more to me."

"With God all things are possible," replied the gardener.

That was a new idea to Mr. X. He had not thought of God as being of any help in his case.

"You have been worshipping at the altar of material wealth, power, and influence," observed the workman. "You have neglected the spiritual things. The Scriptures say,—'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you . . . keep the commandments . . . love thy neighbor as thyself.' You must be obedient to these simple requirements. Then you will be better."

The stricken man was stunned. The meek workman had uncovered his great sins and held them up before his very eyes. What an appalling spectacle! Mr. X thought at once of the past; how greedily, selfishly, arrogantly, and dominantly he had lived; how he had squeezed

his fortune from the toil of others; and how, to hide his actual self, he had made much show of pretended interest in worthy things. The sham of it all haunted him. And then he knew for the first time how useless his life had been. He realized, as never before, that the thoughts he had been thinking throughout the years were reflected in his stricken condition and, in fact, had produced it. He had sacrificed health, happiness, friends. That was the awful price he had paid for his gigantic mental mistake,—selfish thinking. All the while, the meek workman held good thoughts, true thoughts, for his master. He knew that his stricken condition was as unreal as the thinking that had brought it on. Then he ventured to declare,—“You are better now. God will heal you.”

“What must I do to be healed?” inquired Mr. X.

“I will answer that question by repeating the words of the Master,” said the gardener. “‘Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you . . . keep the commandments . . . love thy neighbor as thyself.’”

The gardener returned to his work, leaving Mr. X to meditate on their interview. By this time, the master was ready to quit his old thoughts. He could think only of what the workman had said,—“ ‘Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you . . . keep the commandments . . . love thy neighbor as thyself.’ ” Those thoughts filled his mind to the exclusion of all others. And thus he pondered them in patient endeavor to be obedient thereunto. He resolved to seek “first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness,” to “keep the commandments,” to “love his neighbor” as himself, and to live. In doing these things mentally, he conceived new ways to invest his wealth and to arrange his business so that, even without loss to himself, they might be used for the larger good of others. He reorganized his vast industry on a new basis of full-time operation in manufacturing and selling products that supplied a wide range of human needs at fair prices. He paid good wages to his employees and, after setting aside for himself a reasonable return on the capital invested, shared the re-

mainder of his earnings with them. In these ways, he kept "the commandments." Thenceforth, he gave of his wealth, power, and influence to sustain the ideal of constructive service to humanity. In consequence of his changed thinking, Mr. X was healed of his stricken condition. He survived the mythical three score years and ten. He had been "born again." He had learned that health, happiness, and prosperity are states of mind. He had come to realize the meaning of the Master's word,—*"Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted."*

III

“Blessed are the meek ; for
they shall inherit the earth.”

THERE is an old story that illustrates the types of thinking referred to in the First and Second Beatitudes, as well as the more divine type of thinking mentioned in the Third Beatitude.

In the story, the “poor in spirit” are said to be in a deep hole. A way of escape is provided for them, but they do not seem to know about it. They appear to be full of fear. They are bound by their ignorance of the truth that makes men free. Near the hole is a tall pole upon which are said to be perched a group of the “they that mourn.” They have not forgotten their losses. They are too stubborn and opinionated to let go of their false beliefs. They still crave wealth, and place, and power. They are not happy and are unaware that wrong thinking will not produce happiness. At the base of the pole and at the top of the hole

are a company of gentle, earnest, unselfish, God-fearing people. They are worthily the envy of the "poor in spirit" and of the "they that mourn." They are the meek. They "shall inherit the earth."

The moral of the story is that the first group must come up from the hole, the second must come down from the pole, and both groups must hit the divine level. That divine level is meekness.

Meekness is a quality of divinity that may be manifested in human thinking and conduct,—here and now. It is the "still, small voice" which speaks more eloquently than the mortal mighty. In it, there is no false pride; no greed for wealth, and place, and power. It is un-selfed dignity.

The meek are not downcast, hopeless, remorseful; nor greedy, selfish, dominant. They are the apostles of true humility.

The meek go about doing good. They claim no higher estate. They are the exemplars of simple virtues and simple living. They turn mourning and spiritual poverty into joy and gladness. They demonstrate the warmth of

heaven in the very presence of those whose star of hope seems to be flickering out. Why should they not "inherit the earth," and heaven too?

The Master was the meekest man of all time. He said,—“I can of mine own self do nothing; . . . because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.” He looked constantly to God, infinite Mind,—the source of all life, strength, and power, for guidance, and admonished his followers to do likewise. His mission was to demonstrate that the real man,—the image and likeness of God, reflects in his thinking the thoughts of infinite Mind. What are those thoughts like? Paul referred to some of them as “the fruit of the Spirit” and named them “love, joy, peace, . . . gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law.” They are those qualities of divine Mind that are demonstrable in human thought and action,—even here and now.

There are no thoughts of hate, envy, anger, jealousy, deception, selfishness, or domination in meekness. Such thoughts are destructive states of mind. They are the names for wrong

thinking. The "poor in spirit," in their ignorance, and the "they that mourn," in their selfishness and ignorance as well, think such thoughts. But the meek do not! The states of mind just mentioned are types of mental madness,—phases of insanity. They have destroyed millions in wars and in racial and religious quarrels. They are badges of ignorance of God, Mind, and of gross intolerance toward men. They are the polar opposites of meekness.

Modesty is often mistaken for meekness. It is a type of human thought and conduct that may be assumed to curry favor; or it may be manifested in timidity, in self-depreciation, or in a sham form of self-exaltation. These are all mental mistakes. They stay our progress toward better living. We must rid ourselves of them by thinking in terms of "love, joy, peace, . . . gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Against these, "there is no law."

We see about us mortals who covet our good will under cloaks of modesty. They usually say little and do little of benefit to others. They seem to approach their affairs in a quiet but

rather effective way. Finally, we learn that they are inconsiderate of anyone who does not mould his thought in theirs; that they have grown up in a narrow and ungenerous environment and harbor petty grudges. Unhappily for them, they are shutting out of their thinking the divine qualities of "love, joy, peace, . . . gentleness, goodness, . . . meekness," gratitude, happiness, and service, and are doomed to dwell in thought among the "poor in spirit" or the "they that mourn."

Then, again, we see about us men of the selfish, dominant type. If they are not mourners already, they are moving in that direction. They are personally ambitious for place and power, and have a strange misconception of their importance. The community tolerates them. They engage in many worthy activities but either assume prominent rôles at the sufferance of their fellows or else sulk and look disdainfully upon the good works of others. They cooperate only when they lead or direct. Usually, they surround themselves with gullible, unthinking satellites who cater to their insuperable vanity.

Woe unto them! They cannot thrive for long on that sort of thinking! The bubble will burst! It cannot sustain itself on such mental mistakes.

In his *The Over-Soul*, Mr. Emerson has referred to the types of thinking just mentioned, thus,—

“ . . . The ambitious vulgar show you their spoons and brooches and rings, and preserve their cards and compliments. The more cultivated, in their account of their own experience, cull out the pleasing, poetic circumstance; the visit to Rome, the man of genius they saw; the brilliant friend they know; still further on perhaps the gorgeous landscape, the mountain lights, the mountain thoughts they enjoyed yesterday,—and so seek to throw a romantic color over their life. But the soul that ascendeth to worship the great God is plain and true; has no rose color; no fine friends; no chivalry; no adventures; does not want admiration; dwells in the hour that now is, in the earnest experience of the common day,—by reason of the present moment and the mere trifle having become porous to thought and bibulous of the sea of light.”

The meek soul is the great soul,—the reflection of God,—infinite Mind,—the Over-Soul. He attains his station in the realm of greatness by thinking and reflecting “love, joy, peace, . . . gentleness, goodness . . . meekness.” He escapes the morbid thinking and living of the “poor in spirit,” and the sordid thinking and living of the “they that mourn.” His slumbers are not troubled by the ghosts of despair and remorse nor haunted by the bursting bubbles of self-importance. He knows that of his own self he can do nothing. He knows that his strength and power come from God,—infinite Mind, and reflects them in his own thought and action. He shall “inherit the earth.” It is his already,—even here and now. He is the real man.

Human theories, fame, and pride
Are fleeting, evanescent toys,—
The high peaks of a transient tide
Ebbing anon as passing joys.

Men covet them with dauntless zeal,
With stubborn will they rush the goal
And ride roughshod o’er mortal keel,—
Mistaking sense for might of Soul.

There'll come a day that some call fate,
Bringing to those who look in vain
On earth-born idols,—soon or late,
A toll of sorrow in refrain.

Then why put trust,—that's sure to fall,
In men's theories, fame, and pride,—
Since God,—Spirit, Love, Mind, is All?
With Him,—there is no ebbing tide.

“By each good thought, each kindly deed,
We mount to summits yet unseen.”
And, as we rise, we'll share the meed
That Mind bestows,—His peace serene.

Our humble task is God to know,
“To comprehend His mode and plan,”—
Obey His law,—His image show
In thought and deed,—the real man.

“Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.” What shall they inherit? “The earth,” do you say? Ah, no! The Master never promised any material thing as a reward for meekness. He was not interested in the earth nor in things earthy, for he said: “. . . he that is of the earth is earthy, and speaketh of the earth; he that cometh from heaven is above all. . . . My kingdom is not of this world. . . .

seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Hence, it is apparent that the Master used the term "inherit the earth" in the figurative sense. By "the earth," he meant "the kingdom of God," heaven,—even here and now. It is the same kingdom that the "poor in spirit" may enjoy; the same kingdom in which the "they that mourn . . . shall be comforted,"—when they change their thinking.

IV

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.

“Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.

“Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God.”

THE Scriptures inform us that God is Spirit,—that He is Love, and that He created man in His image and likeness. The Icelandic translation reads,—“He created man in the image and likeness of Mind, in the image and likeness of Mind created He him.” Mortals have been believing that man, in the Scriptural sense, is a human being or person and, by reasoning from that premise, they have been believing, also, that God is a superhuman or supernatural Being or Person. Such believing, to use a commonplace illustration, has put “the

cart before the horse." It has been like reasoning from shadow up to substance.

Our thought processes must be reversed. The primary step is to understand God. If we accept the King James translation or the Icelandic translation, or both, as being authoritative, our major premise must be that God is Spirit; that God is Love; that God is Mind. Our next premise must be that man is the image and likeness of God, Spirit, Love, Mind. Then, our conclusion must be that man, in the Scriptural sense, is spiritual; that he is lovely or loving; that he is wholly mental; and that the real man is not a material human being or person at all.

In the first chapter of Genesis appears an account of the spiritual creation, including man made in the image and likeness of God, Mind. Then, in the second chapter, appears a separate account of the so-called matter-man who was formed "of the dust of the ground." Nowhere is it said that the matter-man was made in the image and likeness of the Creator. The account states that, before this man was made, "there went up a mist from the earth." That "mist" has deluded mortals ever since. It has obscured

their vision of God and the real man. It has led them to misunderstand both. It is believed now that the latter account is an allegory. It cannot be a true story of the creation of the spiritual man, nor has there been any attempt on the part of the translators to make it so appear.

Since God is Mind, it is both easy and logical to think of the real man as being wholly mental. We may readily conclude, therefore, that the real man,—the man to whom the Scriptures refer as having been created in the image and likeness of God,—Mind, is Mind's expression or idea, for Mind can be expressed only in ideas, and such ideas must be spiritual, because God is Spirit; they must be lovely or loving, because God is Love. Webster defines idea as being,—“A real likeness, or representation; also, an embodiment of the essence of something. A mental image . . . ; as, an idea of happiness.” From this definition, as applied to the real man, we can see that he is not made up of flesh, blood, bones, and other material parts. He is the image, the representation, the divine idea, of God, Spirit, Love, Mind. He is the likeness of Spirit in that he, as the idea of

Spirit, is good, pure, true, spiritual. He is the likeness of Love in that he, as the idea of Love, is meek, kind, gentle, loving. He is the likeness of Mind in that he, as the idea of Mind, is wholly mental. He is neither mortal nor material. These conclusions dispose of the out-worn belief that man,—the man referred to in the Scriptures as being the image and likeness of God, Spirit, Love, Mind, is a human being or personality. They likewise dispose of the false reasoning that, if man is a human being or personality, God must be a superhuman or supernatural Being or Personality.

Since God is Mind, matter has no place in His kingdom. It is unlike Him. It is also unlike the real man,—the image, idea, of God, Mind. Matter does not exist outside of consciousness. There is no quality of divinity in it. It is admitted by eminent psychologists and scientists that matter is only an objectified mental concept. They formerly accepted the atom as the basis of material existence and reasoned from phenomenon up to noumenon,—from shadow up to substance. In recent years, the atom has lost its exalted place in their calculations. They now

claim to have discovered that matter is composed, theoretically at least, of positive and negative elements called electrons; and that these elements are ethereal in nature and without form. Hence, they reason, and virtually admit, that matter, if anything at all, is no more than concentrated electrical energy and that it has no definite existence outside of consciousness. With these concessions, we may feel more secure in the conviction that the universe is an universe of Mind,—that Mind is everything, and everywhere; and that matter, being unlike Mind, has no actual reality.

We can never understand God and the real man from a material standpoint. The thinking of the world,—which has deluded us so long, is being dissolved by the new-old understanding of spiritual law. The law of mathematics is analogous to and, indeed, is a type or phase of the law of Spirit. The oft-repeated illustration of “two times two are four” may be helpful here. “Two times two are four” is universally true,—true here, true in China, in Africa, in Siberia, in the stratosphere, at the center of the earth,—

true everywhere. It is a spiritual fact infinitely true. If all we know as the material world should be annihilated, that fact would yet be true. This illustrates in a simple way the nature of spiritual law. Like the law of mathematics, it is ever-operative,—ever-available to be applied in the solution of human problems. An anonymous writer has said,—“Law is the way God acts.” As we become individually conscious of the operation of spiritual law, we are able to express in our own thought and action the nature, qualities, and attributes of God, Mind. Spiritual perception enables us to replace the material senses with divine consciousness, whereby we may discern the activity and operation of spiritual law. The Beatitudes now under consideration have a practical meaning when interpreted from a spiritual basis.

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.” The words “hunger and thirst,” to material sense, suggest a craving for food and drink. But the Master did not so use them. He said “hun-

ger and thirst after righteousness." To be righteous is to think right and to be right with God; to reflect in thought and demonstrate in action His nature, qualities, and attributes; to express mentally His image and likeness in terms of love, peace, mercy, purity, honesty, harmony, kindness, gratefulness, forgiveness. That is righteousness! To "hunger and thirst after righteousness" means to sincerely desire to be righteous.

If we "hunger and thirst after,"—that is, sincerely desire, "righteousness," and reflect righteous thoughts and perform righteous deeds, we shall receive the reward that awaits righteous conduct. We must first understand that God, Mind, is the source of all righteousness and that the Master was our exemplar in righteous living and thinking. Then we must desire to be righteous even as the Master was righteous. God will not take us "by the boot straps" and lift us into His kingdom. If we get there, it will be because we sincerely desire that experience and are willing to work to possess it. We must be the actors in every scene of the great drama of life. God and His spiritual law

are perfect. He will not descend to the level of mortal thought to share His perfection with us. But we can and must surrender our false mortal beliefs and elevate our thought to His. We must bring our consciousness into harmony with divine consciousness. This work requires individual effort supported by a sincere desire to be God-like. If we accept God's spiritual law and demonstrate its utility in better thinking and living, we shall be the victors,—we “shall be filled,”—that is, we shall be rewarded with the satisfaction, the happiness, the contentment, and the peace of mind that righteousness provides for the children of God. How may we receive that reward? By reflecting in thought and demonstrating in action the nature, qualities, and attributes of God, Mind!

“Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.”

Edmund Spenser, an early English poet, said:

“Who will not mercie unto others show,
How can he mercie ever hope to have?”

And Shakespeare stressed the nobility of mercy in these words:

“The quality of mercy is not strain’d ;
It droppeth, as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the earth beneath : it is twice bless’d ;
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes :
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest ; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown ;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings ;
But mercy is above the sceptred sway ;
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself ;
And earthly power doth then show likest God’s,
When mercy seasons justice.”

And the Psalmist has assured us of the enduring nature of God’s mercy, saying :

“The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting
to everlasting upon them that fear him.”

Mercy is a quality of divinity. It is an activity of Mind that we may express in thoughts and deeds of kindness, gentleness, and compassion toward others,—especially those in want, misery, and distress. It does not become us to look

down upon the latter. Our duty is to be intelligently sympathetic and charitable toward them. They need mercy. This does not mean that we should shower them with useless alms. Mistaken charity benefits neither him that gives nor him that receives. It harms both. The charity that unwittingly encourages men to expect alms, though it may wear the mantle of common approval, often tends to create the very conditions it would alleviate. The Master admonished his followers thus:—"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." It is better for a man in want, misery or distress to be shown compassionately, by precept and example, how he may lift himself out of his condition than to confer upon him, under the guise of charity, that which may seemingly relieve but never heal his condition. What he most needs are spiritual ideas, not material alms; ideas to be gained by seeing "good works" whereby he may "glorify your Father which is in heaven" by doing "good works" himself. The best demonstration of charity is to teach men to so live and work that they will not need charity; to

teach them how to think aright about their duties to God and man, and thereby demonstrate in their own experiences that want, misery and distress are the children of material-mindedness; and to teach them that men may be lifted out of the conditions that so sorely beset them by obedience to spiritual law.

“Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.” The reward for mercy is mercy. By holding for others thoughts of kindness, gentleness, compassion, and forgiveness, we enlarge our own capacity to receive mercy from divine consciousness. Our reward will be spiritual growth in understanding and demonstrating the nature, qualities, and attributes of infinite Mind.

Mortals must experience a change of thought regarding charity and mercy. This change must take place in the individual consciousness. Though progress may appear to be slow, “hope always sees a star.” Sooner or later, mortals will awake from their material dreams and lift themselves out of want, misery and distress by obedience to spiritual law. Until then, let us throw “the mantle of charity” about them and

hasten their advancement with thoughts and deeds of mercy. "The merciful man doeth good in his own soul."

"Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God."

Absolute purity of heart is not compatible with mortal nature or mortal existence. The Master was the most righteous man of all time. His understanding of spiritual law amazed his followers. Through that understanding, he cleansed the leper, healed the sick, restored sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf, raised the dead, and was resurrected from the tomb. Even after all those experiences, he had not yet attained absolute purity of heart,—that is, spiritual perfection, nor did he attain it until the moment of the ascension. It was then that he was fully conscious of the fact that "the pure in heart . . . shall see God."

The long journey from mortality to immortality,—from material-mindedness to spiritual perfection, should not discourage us. The road to travel is wholly mental. The divine command

is,—“Work out your own salvation.” The Master was our exemplar. From the moment he tarried in the temple in the midst of the doctors until his final appearance on earth, he “waxed strong in spirit” and was “filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him.” Throughout his journey from mortality to immortality, he was about his “Father’s business.” That is also your “business” and mine. It is the only real “business” there is. Spiritual perfection is the goal.

Material-mindedness is the mist that has obscured the vision of mankind. It has produced the “poor in spirit” and the “they that mourn.” We have observed how they may be lifted out of want, misery, distress, and mourning. Each step of their journey will be one of comfort,—one of happiness. Their advancement will wax “strong in spirit.” It will be “filled with wisdom.” As they go forward, God’s nature, qualities, and attributes, and His spiritual law of perfection, gradually, but surely, will be unfolded to them. In the proportion that they become aware of those qualities and attributes, “they shall see God,” mentally and spiritually.

The unfoldment to consciousness of the universe of Mind is a foretaste of spiritual perfection. In this way, and not otherwise, we "shall see God."

"Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God."

To common understanding, a peace-maker is one who reconciles persons at variance; who establishes accord among men and nations. This is a very human definition. It may mean peace either with or without victory. If the former, it is often wrought by mere material force; if the latter, it is wrested through fear of more disastrous consequences. In either event, it is not true peace. The so-called peace at Versailles was wrought by force and fear combined, accompanied by impositions so intolerable as to amount to a constant war-threat since the day it was concluded. In the light of after-experiences, how appropriate are the words from Jeremiah: "Peace, peace; when there is no peace"; or the words of William Watson in *Ver Tenebrosum*:

“Verily I do think
War is as hateful almost, and well-nigh
As ghastly, as this terrible Peace, whereby
We halt forever on the crater’s brink,
And feed the wind with phrases.”

Peace-makers, “called the children of God,” are they who establish peace according to God’s spiritual law of harmony. They must first be at peace with infinite Mind and then reflect in thought and demonstrate in action the utility of spiritual harmony in solving the discordant problems that are indigenous to material-mindedness. Such peace-makers are as a “city that is set on an hill” and “cannot be hid.” They “are the light of the world.” They have no occasion to resort to force or fear. They are at peace with God first,—then, with men, and are exemplars for the guidance of others whose wrong thinking, perhaps selfish thinking, has led them into the throes of human conflict. “Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace,” said the Psalmist.

V

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake; for their’s is the kingdom of heaven.”

THE Master uttered a stern rebuke to his critics, saying,—“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in . . . for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess . . . for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.”

What a rebuke! What an indictment! And it was made by the meekest man who ever trod the globe. That rebuke, that indictment, is addressed to all present-day persecutors of the

righteous, pretenders of the faith, back-biters, fault-finders, scandal-mongers. "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" said the Master.

The scribes were a body of learned men,—harsh, intolerant interpreters of Holy Writ, functionaries of state. They appealed to the upper classes and sought to array them against "the carpenter's son." They did not lose an opportunity to except to his utterances, criticize his conduct, condemn his morals. They vied to entangle him in their webs of sophistry; to trick and confound him with their weighty questions. But "the carpenter's son" always emerged triumphant from such discussions.

The Pharisees were another equally harsh, intolerant sect who proudly boasted of the traditions of their fathers. They appealed to the lower classes and assumed to be authoritative expositors of the Scriptures. They preferred ceremonial rites to justice and mercy, and were given to fasts, prayers, washings, alms, and to much show thereof in public places. They spied on the works of the Master, accused him falsely, and entered into plots to make away

with him. Because of their numbers, they exerted a vicious influence over the ruling classes. To them was charged the guilt of the Tragedy on the Cross.

In every age, the world has had its scribes and Pharisees. We have them today. They are critical, intolerant, self-righteous folk,—given to gossiping, fault-finding, scandal-mongering, and to contriving and scheming to obstruct the progress of every right activity.

In the book of The Acts appears a narrative of the experiences of Peter and John who had been preaching in the temple, and healing the sick by spiritual means. It illustrates the extent to which scribes and Pharisees will go to persecute the righteous. A man who had been lame from his birth came and begged alms. Peter and John were destitute of worldly goods, but the former said to the lame man,—“Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.” Peter took the man “by the right hand, and lifted him up and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.” He went “walking and leaping, and praising God”

for what had happened to him. Then the people, in great wonderment, congregated at the porch of the temple and Peter addressed them, saying,—“Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?” Whereupon, he meekly assured them that the lame man’s healing had come about in the Master’s name and through faith in his name. Continuing, Peter said,—“Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand before you whole. . . . Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

That was saying too much to suit the Sadducees and others in authority. They took counsel among themselves, threatened Peter and John, and ordered them to desist from speaking further in the Master’s name. To this, the apostles replied,—“Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than

unto God, judge ye." They continued their work unafraid. "There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits; and they were healed every one." Thereupon, the high priest and those with him were filled with indignation. They laid hands on the apostles and lodged them in the common prison. "But the angel of the Lord (the spiritual power of righteous thinking) by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, 'Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.' And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught."

On the following day, the high priest sent officers to the prison to bring the apostles before the council. The officers returned without their men and reported that they had found the prison "shut with all safety" and the keepers at their post, but that, when the doors were opened, there was no man found therein. About the same time, it was reported that the apostles who had been put in prison were "standing in the temple, and teaching the people." There-

upon, the captain with other officers went to the temple and brought Peter and John before the council. No violence was done unto them "for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned." The high priest rebuked the apostles, saying,—“Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name?” Peter answered,—“We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted . . . to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; . . .”

The righteous boldness of the apostles “cut to the heart” and the rulers “took counsel to slay them.” It was a tense moment. In the confusion of it all, a “man of the hour” was sorely needed. And such a man was there. He was a Pharisee, a doctor of the law, a dispassionate judge. His name was Gamaliel. That man spoke words of wisdom that should give pause to all who would obstruct the progress of any righteous activity. Said he:

“Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody ; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves ; who was slain ; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered and brought to nought. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him ; he also perished ; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. And now I say unto you, refrain from these men, and let them alone ; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought ; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it ; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.”

When Gamaliel had finished, the council agreed with him. Yet, notwithstanding his sound advice, they beat the apostles, commanded them to speak no more in the Master’s name, and let them go. They departed “rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.” They had been “persecuted for righteousness’ sake” and their reward was the kingdom of heaven, happiness, then and there. They knew, as Bryant has written, that—

“Truth crushed to earth shall rise again ;
Th’ eternal years of God are hers ;
But Error, wounded, writhes in pain,
And dies among his worshipers.”

Persecution has always been the favorite weapon of men actuated by motives of envy, pride, hatred, jealousy, vengeance. It is the abnormal child of wrong thinking. It is destructive, —never constructive. It tears down,—never builds up. And the very certain thing about it is that it harms the persecutors more than those they would persecute. Men may do wrong to others but, in the end, they thereby wrong themselves. Nothing reacts on one so positively as his own sins. That reaction is the only hell there is. The irrevocable law of compensation makes it so. The virus of envy, pride, hatred, jealousy, vengeance,—all names for wrong thinking, is as poisonous as the fang of a viper. Its insidious percolations undermine the very bases of human health and happiness and rob mortals of everything that contributes to make life worth living.

Scribes and Pharisees must learn that evil,—wrong thinking, has no real power. It inevitably

runs a short course and destroys itself in the effort. Any activity that is not right will not prevail. It "will come to nought." There is in it no element of good. It is without a foundation upon which to stand and sustain itself.

We cannot afford to hazard the chances that the ways of wickedness suggest. "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven," declared the Master. That is a warning to you and to me. Righteousness is the only passport by which we may enter the kingdom of heaven, happiness, here, now or ever. It is also the only sure defense against the assaults of scribes and Pharisees. They may do what they will, but their wrong thinking can never reach a mind that is not open to receive it. A consciousness filled with righteous thoughts has no place wherein the wrong thinking of others may find lodgment.

It has been said that "One on God's side is a majority." If we are right,—right according to the standard fixed by the Master, what does it matter who is against us? At most, our only

opposition will be wrong thinking, and wrong thinking harms no one but the man who thinks it. It may seem temporarily obstructive, but it is never powerful. We know that two times two are four. It will not change that fact, nor harm us, if a million people believe that two times two are five. Wrong thinking is simply ignorance of Truth. It is plainly a mental mistake. Why, then, should we permit ourselves to be disturbed by the sayings of scribes and Pharisees? Why "fret . . . because of evil doers?" We should not, except to pity them. True, they may persecute the righteous man,—even to crucifixion, as they did the Master,—even to burning at the stake, as they did de Molay, but they can never deny him a glorious immortality. His name and example will be as beacon lights to point the course of future generations in attaining and sustaining a higher and more righteous civilization. His "is the kingdom of heaven."

VI

THE GREAT SERMON, CONTINUED

THE Master continued The Great Sermon with a series of concrete illustrations of the principles underlying his doctrine. He was addressing his disciples rather than the crowd that followed them. It was essential that they should comprehend his platform. He realized that he would leave them soon. They must be taught to carry on. Although he had spoken rather abstractly in stating the Beatitudes, he must have thought it necessary to speak further in terms that his hearers might understand. "Ye are the salt of the earth. . . . Ye are the light of the world," said he. Salt and light always have been human necessities. Hence, they are ready symbols of the spiritual nature of true discipleship. Salt is typical of the preservation of Christian character. Light is typical of the goodness which attracts the attention of others and serves to guide the course of their thinking

and living. It was in this sense that the Master used the words "salt" and "light."

The Great Sermon points out the difference between the observances of the old law and the requirements of the so-called new law. In truth, there never was but one law. The Master said,—"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." When a certain lawyer asked him "which is the great commandment in the law," the Master replied,—“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” The same commandments were parts of the old law. (Lev. 19:18; Deut. 6:5). There was nothing new about them. The scribes and Pharisees, however, held to the letter of the law as the last word in their faith. They were devoted to the traditions of their fathers, but those traditions had to do with formal observances of the law and found expression in their rites and ritualism. The

Master said this was not enough. His doctrine went further. He astonished the disciples by declaring,—“That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Mere formal obedience to the outward expression of the law was not sufficient. The Master insisted that the law must be fulfilled, that the letter thereof must be transcended, and that the spirit,—the inward meaning of the law, must be unfolded, understood and obeyed. His doctrine gave eternal validity to the law by restoring to it the lost element of spirituality.

The law read,—“Thou shalt not kill,” and imposed severe penalties for its breach. The Master’s doctrine prohibited not only the physical act of killing, but also prohibited wrong thinking in terms of envy, anger, selfishness, jealousy, and the like, which precedes the act and furnishes the human motive for it. The Master’s doctrine went to the very source of mental error, and would correct it by substituting right thinking in its stead. A mind filled with good thoughts will have no place left in it for

thoughts of envy, anger, selfishness and jealousy which lead to murder. "Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift," said the Master. The doctrine of the Pharisees began and ended with the formal command,—“Thou shalt not”; the doctrine of the Master began and ended with the correction of wrong thinking. It reached the inward motive, whereas, that of the Pharisees reached only the outward physical act. Becoming “reconciled to thy brother” is a right mental activity. This is the vital part of the Master’s doctrine. The interpretation of the old law was: “Life for life, eye for eye.” The Master’s doctrine was,—“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.” This is the fulfilling of the law,—“Thou shalt not kill.”

The old law read,—“Thou shalt not commit adultery.” The Master’s doctrine was stated thus,—“That whosoever looketh on a woman

to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." It further prohibited divorcement, except for fornication, and then declared,—“whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.” The fulfillment of the law searched the consciousness of the individual and corrected the wrong thinking that might result in the adulterous act. The Master’s doctrine went to the very source of the error and unmasked it. He taught that the offence of divorcement, except for dishonor of nuptial vows, could not be healed or condoned by a scrap of paper issued under a decree of court. He taught that the spiritual relationship created by lawful wedlock invoked an inseparable unity, and that any wrong thinking which would violate that unity is in derogation of the law. Hence, his doctrine unfolded and fulfilled the law.

The old law commanded observance of the Sabbath. Yet, on the Sabbath, the Master healed the man whose hand was withered. The Pharisees took him to task for so doing. They sought to accuse him. He replied,—“What man shall there be among you, that shall have one

sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore, it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days." Then he commanded the man to stretch forth his hand, "and it was restored whole, like as the other." In this instance, the Master taught that the law was and is universal and ever-operative at all times and places. The activity of the law is not limited to certain days. It is "lawful to do well" always. This interpretation of the law was new to the Pharisees. It went far beyond their cold observances. Yet, it fulfilled the law.

The Master's doctrine threw new light on the law of Love. "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so? . . . Love your enemies." This doctrine was revolutionary. The Pharisees were nationally minded. They limited their affections and friendships to their own countrymen. They reserved their enmities for other people. Their religion was for Jews

alone. They interpreted the law as being applicable only to their race. They said,—“Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” To them, only Jews were their neighbors; only Jews were “the children of thy people.” They were loyal to their own kind, and to the traditions of their own kind, but not to others. To them, it was not unlawful to hate the Gentiles. The Master’s doctrine was, therefore, revolutionary. His interpretation of the law gave it eternal verity. He taught that the law is universal in its scope and adaptations; that it is broad enough to embrace all peoples in all climes; and that it is available to friends and enemies alike, to Jews and Gentiles alike, to nationals and foreigners alike. It is the law of infinite Mind which finds expression everywhere and at all times in thoughts and deeds of joy, peace, love, mercy, kindness, meekness, gentleness, compassion, and the like. It was the law then; it is the law now. The Master’s doctrine did not “destroy the law, or the prophets.”

The Pharisees gave alms, fasted, and prayed in public places, and made much show of their so-called virtues. They craved publicity and the praises of men. The Master held that such rites were mere pretenses of righteousness. He expounded a new doctrine that searched the consciences of men. It tabooed outward show. "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, . . . do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. . . . let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth. . . . when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Thereupon, the Master taught the disciples (then and now) in what manner they should pray,—

First, — by opening prayer with an address to the Father, as "Our Father which art in heaven";

Second, — by expressing reverence for the Father's name, as "Hallowed be thy name";

Third, — by acknowledging that the Father's kingdom is now come, that it is already here, as "Thy kingdom come";

Fourth, — by acknowledging that it is the Father's will, and not our own, that shall be done, here and now, as "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven";

Fifth, — by asking the Father for spiritual grace,—by attuning our consciousness to His, as "Give us this day our daily bread." The Master was not concerned about material things, whether they be bread or a stone, for he said,—“It is the spirit that quickeneth”;

Sixth, — by praying that our debts ("debts" being a term for "sins" in the rabbinical writings) be forgiven, as "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,"—meaning,—forgive us our sins when and as we forsake them, and when and as we forgive the sins of others, all in obedience to the divine command,—“Love your enemies”;

Seventh, — by understanding that the Father "art of purer eyes than to behold evil" and that He will not lead us into temptation, for temptation arises from evil alone; and, also, by understanding that we are delivered from evil by attuning our consciousness to His,—thereby forsaking evil ourselves; and by praying the Father to "lead us

not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,"—meaning,—to lift our thoughts to His, thereby to escape temptation and to assure our delivery from sin; and,

Eighth, — by closing prayer with the understanding that it is already granted by the Father who "knoweth what things ye have need of," and by acknowledging that the Father, who is infinite and all powerful, shall have the glory eternally, as "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever."

Thus, the Master taught the disciples how to pray; how to get in tune mentally with infinite Mind; how to reflect in thought the nature, qualities, and attributes of the Father; and, by thus communing, prepare themselves to go forward in demonstrating the fulfillment of the law.

The Master's doctrine embraced a code of ethics for the guidance of the disciples. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven; . . . For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Those rules of conduct forbade the making of false gods out of material things or material wealth. "For the love of money is the root of all evil." Our treasures, therefore, must be spiritual treasures,—those that come as rewards for righteousness. The Master held no criticism for the mere accumulation of wealth. His attack was against one's making a god of it. Any one possessed of wealth, even without loss to himself, may render constructive service to mankind, and thereby fulfill the commandment,—“love thy neighbor as thyself.” He may thus lay up “treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt.” The essential requirement is that he shall work to one primary purpose,—that is, to obey the law to fulfillment. For if “thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.” This means that our thought must be focused constantly on spiritual things to the end that our lives shall be full of light, health, happiness, and prosperity.

We cannot progress spiritually by serving two masters. “Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” We must choose one or the other. If we serve the former, we shall be guided into ways

of peace and plenty. We are commanded to take no thought of what we shall eat, or drink, or wear, "For after all these things do the Gentiles seek." The scribes and Pharisees sought and still seek them. The Master's doctrine went further. He said,—“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Hence, “the kingdom of God, and His righteousness” must be our primary objective and, in consequence thereof, we may obtain an adequate supply of all things whatsoever we may need.

Mankind have been believing that their source of supply of needful things is wholly material. In this, they are wholly mistaken. God, Mind, is the source of all good. That good is communicated to the human consciousness through the activity of spiritual law. It may be manifested here and now by accepting in consciousness the fact that good is inexhaustible and by demonstrating in our experiences its ever-presence. If, in our thinking, we express the spiritual idea of adequate supply, that expression, when realized, is already our supply

of every needful thing,—including health, happiness, and prosperity.

The Master's code of ethics commands to "Judge not, that ye be not judged." Criticism of others is a common human fault. Mortals behold the mote in their brother's eye without considering the beam in their own eye. Instead of assuming to correct the shortcomings of others, they should engage themselves at the wholesome task of self-correction. "Silence is golden." An anonymous poet has well said,—

"In men whom men pronounce as ill,
I find so much of goodness still;
In men whom men pronounce divine,
I find so much of sin and blot,—
I hesitate to draw the line
Between the two,—
Where God has not."

After stating the Golden Rule, so familiar to all, and admonishing the disciples to enter the strait gate "which leadeth unto life," and warning them against false prophets, the Master concluded The Great Sermon with a striking parable in these words,—

“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock :

“And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house ; and it fell not : for it was founded upon a rock.

“And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand :

“And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house ; and it fell : and great was the fall of it.”

The wise man is he who understands the law unto fulfillment; who charts the course of his life accordingly; and who lives in obedience thereunto; “for the end of that man is peace.”

FINIS

Date Due

--	--	--	--

Ap 27 '39		
-----------	--	--

Ap 16 43		
----------	--	--

My 17 '44		
-----------	--	--

--	--	--	--

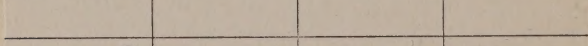
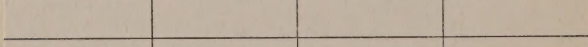
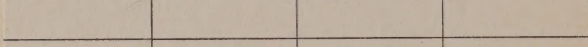
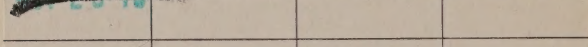
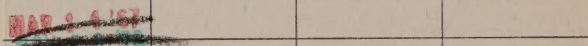
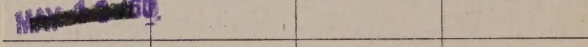
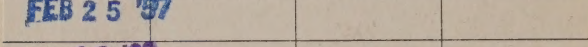
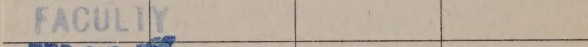
F 28	17	3		
------	----	---	--	--

777			
-----	--	--	--

FE 8-00			
---------	--	--	--

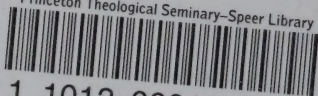
--	--	--	--

MR 3-54		
---------	--	--



BS2418.4.B88
The great sermon,

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 00012 9397